

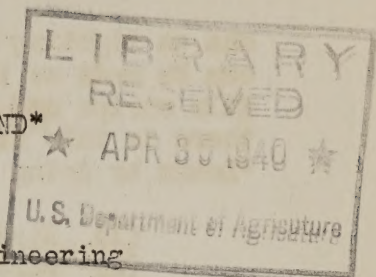
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4-H RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECTS IN MARYLAND\*

By

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We agricultural engineers appreciate the opportunity to discuss questions of joint interest so that we may cooperate more fully with you who are 4-H leaders. During the first year or two in this rural electrification program we have tried to anticipate your needs. Much material has been prepared by a number of States, and various approaches to carrying out the work have been made; but, since the actual participation in total number of boys and girls has been rather low, I am wondering just how much value those young folks have been getting from the work.

We feel quite familiar with 4-H Club work. The motto, "To make the best better" means to all of us constant improvement in ways of doing things. Increase in general and technical knowledge naturally leads to a more definite purpose in life, to self-confidence and a desire for worthy achievement. Our Maryland leaders have asked that they be given more training along with district and local leaders in rural electrification applications. They felt it necessary to know more before being able to go out and work with their groups confidently and be in position to offer timely suggestions. I know that we in Maryland still need more local leader training.

Our early approach to 4-H rural electrification club work was a little short-sighted in that a 12-meeting program was made up covering fundamentals, wires, joints and splices, and some applications, but it was not tied sufficiently into all the other regular club work as we are now trying to do.

We have prepared a list of 25 suggested projects for leaders to refer to when planning work with club members. All-day schools are being scheduled for leaders as well as assistant agents, and we will invite vocational agriculture teachers. In this way we hope to train leaders to carry on more capably as this type of club work grows.

Our information series consists of five circulars. The 4-H first year program in 12 parts is accompanied by our care and repair bulletin No. 76. We have a set of suggestions for remodeling old lamps to make them give good light. Two complete nontechnical demonstrations are given,

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one on lighting and one on wiring and small motors. These demonstrations can be made as technical as you wish. Many items on our suggested list of film strips and movies can be borrowed from power companies, and then there is this list of 25 projects. Our all-day school, with the slogan, "Learn by doing and not by listening," is divided into four parts:

- (1) Lighting and lamp modernizing.
- (2) Wires, joints, splices, and wiring and planning.
- (3) Small motors.
- (4) Equipment such as brooders, hotbeds, small grinders, and electric fence.

This school is patterned after some successful work done in Pennsylvania with vocational agriculture teachers.

I wish right here to emphasize a few general considerations in electrification club work. We realize that productive uses of electricity, applications outside of the home, are essential to good sound rural electrification development for the farm family as well as the serving organization, whether it be a power company or REA. If we are to have electricity in our yet unserved and less densely populated areas, use must increase because line extension policies and REA plans are based on family and farm use per month. Therefore, 4-H projects in general should create interest and activity in productive uses that are profitable to the user or that add to efficiency of the work on that farm or in that home. They should develop an appreciation for adequate facilities because inadequate wiring and lighting facilities are one big reason for restricted use. We trace inadequate facilities to the lack of knowledge of the nature of electricity and factors affecting operation of equipment. Unsafe practices, fire hazards, fuse abuses, and shock hazard, as reflected in the Maryland 4-H safety program, also reflect a lack of fundamental knowledge.

I would like now to ask you how your agricultural engineering specialist can best assist these young folks with their work, can help the leaders and yet not be asked to attend too many local club meetings. From your observation what kind of rural electrification work will these club boys enjoy most and get the most out of? Can we plan a program and suggest it to them in mimeograph or printed form as we are now doing, or must the club apply itself to the project at hand in that area or on that farm? That will depend upon the guidance given first by interested, and then by, well-informed district and local leaders. And then, how can the commercial interests, which are definitely concerned, help the most? Those are some of the problems we can work on together.

Now I know that each of you already has a splendid knowledge of rural electrification work. Good results will be our reward when we remember that the greatest return of 4-H rural electrification work will come to the boys and girls now in position to apply electricity to their present crop, animal, poultry, or other projects.

A word as to the national contest. I have made numerous suggestions from time to time primarily to the end that group effort will be rewarded. The elimination of first, second, and third places for five equal awards in a group; setting aside 45 points out of 100 for club activities alone; and the 3-year 4-H requirement for a State winner are, I believe, all steps in the right direction.

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